

FOURTH-YEAR HIGH SCHOOL MATHEMATICS TRANSITION COURSES

**P-16 Council
Agenda Item IX
December 12, 2007**

Transition Courses

Both the Interagency Task Force on Dual Credit and the Developmental Education Task Force included recommendations regarding K-12 and postsecondary collaboration to reduce remediation rates through transitional coursework that might be done during the senior year of high school. The ACT will be administered on a statewide basis for the first time in March 2008, and many rising seniors will be identified for placement in remedial coursework and must be offered interventions to reduce or eliminate the need for remedial placement in college (2006 SB-130). The Kentucky Department of Education is organizing a workgroup to pursue the development of content that can be delivered during the high school senior year to provide an opportunity for students who meet certain achievement benchmarks to go straight into credit-bearing courses as college freshmen. Should this strategy prove successful, it could be expanded to other content areas and used to develop additional content in mathematics.

A first meeting of the workgroup was held December 5. The purpose of the first meeting was to assess stakeholder interest in P-16 collaboration on transitional courses and to discuss how the work would proceed. A summary of the meeting will be presented to the P-16 Council December 12.

KDE also will recommend that the discussion be broadened to include transitional courses for college credit or dual credit courses. This would expand the scope of the work. The following recommendations from the Interagency Dual Credit Task Force deal specifically with the content and purpose of transitional courses:

Recommendation One – Before Dual Credit: A Proposal to Create Readiness for More Students

While this proposal does not specifically address dual credit programs, the high school and postsecondary sectors must collaborate to ensure that more students are ready to participate in rigorous, college-level coursework as soon as possible—certainly by the time they leave high school. The task force offers this suggestion related to transitional courses leading directly to dual credit or college-credit bearing coursework as a strategy for supporting all youth, and especially at-risk youth, to and through successful transition.

- Establish transitional courses as pathways that lead directly to dual credit or college credit course taking when students demonstrate readiness.
- Provide incentives to create partnerships of high school and college faculty that will result in the creation of rigorous competency-based curricula that develop discipline-specific skills and knowledge students should master before taking college-level courses. These curricula should be highly engaging and demonstrate relevance of the academic discipline to careers.

- Certify students who complete transitional courses as ready for credit-bearing college coursework in the content area.
- Transcript transitional college preparatory coursework at the high school level only.
- Ensure that students who complete transitional coursework prior to graduation have immediate access to and are advised to take a dual credit course in the content area to ensure that gains made are not lost prior to matriculation.
- Prohibit the use of dual credit for developmental or remedial courses. (This does not preclude inclusion of developmental content in credit-bearing college courses for students who need additional time or support but, if the student is in a dual credit course, the student must be making progress toward college credit.)

Recommendation Three – Dual Credit Core

Identify content and performance standards from the postsecondary general education core and the career pathways specialty core that are aligned with and expand upon high school graduation requirements and identify the courses in which they are taught. Refer to this curricula or set of courses as the dual credit core or a suite of courses that represents a clear pathway for the transition from high school to college.

- Focus incentives for students, schools, educators, and institutions on the dual credit core.
- Consider the dual credit core as "accelerated" courses in the same manner as advanced placement courses for the purposes of KRS 158.6543(4)(b), Assessment of Achievement Goals (SB 130).
- Encourage the use of performance-based credit policies at the high school level to ensure that dual credit core courses can replace high school courses without regard to seat time so that students may move ahead as soon as they are ready.
- Identify additional opportunities to provide incentives and rewards to students, educators, and schools for appropriate participation in the dual credit core courses. Examples include: (1) Could students meeting performance benchmarks in dual credit core courses qualify schools for bonus points in the accountability index in the same way that a passing score on an advanced placement exam does? (2) Could KEES funds support student participation in dual credit core courses? (3) Should achievement of certain performance benchmarks in dual credit core courses qualify students for a revised Commonwealth Diploma?
- Specify that developmental or remedial courses may not qualify as dual credit.
- Establish a mechanism to add additional courses to the core and to periodically review and revise the standards on which the core is based.

Rationale

- Kentucky continues to strengthen its high school graduation standards and assessments so that they are aligned with the expectations of readiness for college and the workforce.
- Positive results across programs were related to assurances that college courses were rigorous and high quality. These assurances included some prerequisites based on student demonstrations of academic readiness and strong faculty preparation and qualifications. Course location was another factor. Courses on college campuses are likely to help students identify themselves as college students, acclimate to the college environment, and expose them to postsecondary academic expectations. The study noted that courses offered on the high school campus should be supplemented by college campus exposure.
- Jobs For the Future is recommending that the state design dual enrollment to promote college and workforce preparation for a broad range of students. One way to ensure quality in such a multifaceted system is to align assessments, eligibility criteria, and courses with clear state standards. For example, the state might tie these key aspects of dual enrollment to nationally benchmarked standards for college and workforce readiness in mathematics and English.

Recommendation Four – Access to Fulfill the Individual Learning Plan

Ensure that students who meet eligibility standards are provided with equitable opportunity to participate in the dual credit core through a combination of delivery systems.

- Beyond the core, students should have equitable opportunity to participate in higher levels of college courses that are specifically aligned with the Individual Learning Plan.
- Ensure that students receive the same number and kind of credit towards the diploma from the high school and hours towards the degree from the postsecondary institution for a dual credit course that the student would have received had the course not been dual credit.
- Each student's ILP should include appropriate credit-based transition experiences in the senior year, if not before. Dual credit is one option.
- Make a comprehensive offering of dual credit core courses and student support services available online through collaboration between the Kentucky Virtual High School, the state's postsecondary institutions, and the Kentucky Virtual Campus, including online access to advising, tutoring, and library services.
- Develop information and advising resources for students, teachers, and families that explain the characteristics, advantages, and implications of participation in various credit-based transition opportunities, with particular emphasis on advanced placement and dual credit.

- Provide a mechanism to qualify dual credit courses from out-of-state institutions for applicable incentives if the course is needed for fulfillment of a student's ILP and is not available or accessible inside the state (similar to the Academic Common Market).

Rationale

- Because eligibility criteria are established locally, access to dual enrollment is likely to be uneven across the state. Some districts or colleges could be inhibiting students who might benefit. Others could be admitting students who are ill prepared.
- By policy, local secondary school site councils must provide opportunities for students to pursue college-level learning through advanced placement, International Baccalaureate, or dual enrollment options.
- One of Kentucky's education goals is to ensure that students and families have "more realistic information about the academic and non academic skills they will need to succeed in postsecondary education and training." National research suggests that dual enrollment can familiarize high school students with college expectations and can be particularly motivational when college courses are made available to them at no cost or at a discount. The advent of Kentucky's online ILP presents an opportunity to capitalize on dual enrollment's motivational potential by encouraging all students to participate in dual enrollment by their senior year.